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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) In a telecommunications billing system, a method of providing billing information to a customer in accordance with a customer-defined format, the method comprising:

assigning telephone numbers to company units;

defining how each of the company units relate to each other in a hierarchy;

receiving billing data from at least one service provider at a billing repository;

storing the received billing data with associated information indicating ~~whether~~
that the customer desires presentation of the billing information via a web-based billing application;

storing the hierarchy on a server, the server extracting billing data from the billing repository and formatting the billing data in accordance with the hierarchy, the formatting including processing the billing data associated with each telephone number in accordance with the hierarchy; and

presenting the processed billing information to the customer in accordance with the associated information, the processed billing information presented to the customer

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via a graphical user interface comprising a billing screen including a plurality of columnized charges listed under respective column headings and arranged according to a type of charge, such that selection by the customer of a charge in a particular column causes a report to be displayed to the customer showing detailed charges that comprise the selected charge.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the hierarchy is organized according to corporate structure and/or geographical location of the company units.

3. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the customer-defined format comprises customer-defined labels.

4. (currently amended) In a telecommunications billing system, a method of providing a bill in accordance with a customer-defined format, the method comprising:

receiving billing information from at least one service provider at a billing repository;

retrieving the billing information from a the billing repository, the billing information including associated information indicating ~~whether~~ that a customer desires a paper copy of the bill ~~presentation of the bill via a web-based billing application;~~

processing the retrieved billing information at a server in accordance with the customer-defined format stored on the server, the customer-defined format comprising a hierarchy;

sending the processed billing information to an outputting operation where a bill is generated in accordance with the hierarchy; and

sending the bill to a customer, in accordance with the associated information,
wherein the bill comprises an account summary including a hierarchy total column, a monthly charges column, a usage column, an other charges and credits column, a taxes and surcharges column, and a total column.

5. (original) The method according to claim 4, wherein the hierarchy is organized according to corporate structure and/or geographical location of the company units.

6. (original) The method according to claim 4, wherein the customer-defined format further comprises customer-defined labels.

7. (currently amended) In an electronic billing system, a method of enabling a customer to create a hierarchal structure to support internal company criteria, the method comprising:

enabling the customer to assign telephone numbers to company units;

enabling the customer to define how each of the company units relate to each other in a hierarchy;

storing the hierarchy on a server, the server receiving billing data and associated information indicating ~~whether~~ that the customer desires presentation of billing information via a web-based billing application, from a billing repository and formatting

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the billing data in accordance with the hierarchy; and

enabling the customer to view the billing information associated with selected portions of the hierarchy, in accordance with the associated information;

enabling the customer to update the assignments of telephone numbers, the updating comprising moving the telephone numbers within the hierarchy using Java drag and drop operations;

enabling the customer to update the definition of how each of the company units relate to each other in the hierarchy, the updating comprising moving the company units within the hierarchy using Java drag and drop operations;

enabling a representative of the customer to check out the hierarchy, at which time the hierarchy is available to other representatives of the customer on a read only basis;
and

prompting the representative of the customer to check in the hierarchy.

8. (canceled)

9. (canceled)

10. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein a company unit displayed in the viewed billing information contains a hyperlink to billing information associated with a child node in the hierarchy.

11. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein a charge displayed in a

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column of a summary billing report contains a hyperlink to a detailed billing report associated with the charge.

12. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein the hierarchy is organized according to corporate structure and/or geographical location of the company units.

13. (previously presented) The method according to claim 7, further comprising allowing the customer to set permissions that determine access rights to billing information.

14. (original) The method according to claim 13, wherein a permission is set to determine access to a specific level of the hierarchy.

15. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein the hierarchal structure comprises a customer-defined format comprising customer-defined labels.

16. (currently amended) In an electronic billing system, a method of creating a hierarchal structure to support a customer's internal company criteria, the method comprising:

assigning telephone numbers to company units according to the customer's internal company criteria;

defining how each of the company units relate to each other in a hierarchy in accordance with the customer's request;

storing the hierarchy on a server, the server receiving billing data and associated

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information indicating ~~whether that~~ a customer desires presentation of billing information via a web-based billing application, from a billing repository and formatting the billing data in accordance with the hierarchy, the billing repository having received the billing data from at least one service provider; and

enabling the customer to view the billing information associated with selected portions of the hierarchy, in accordance with the associated information;

enabling the customer to update the assignments of telephone numbers, the updating comprising moving the telephone numbers within the hierarchy using Java drag and drop operations;

enabling the customer to update the definition of how each of the company units relate to each other in the hierarchy, the updating comprising moving the company units within the hierarchy using Java drag and drop operations;

enabling a representative of the customer to check out the hierarchy, at which time the hierarchy is available to other representatives of the customer on a read only basis;
and

prompting the representative of the customer to check in the hierarchy.

17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (original) The method according to claim 16, wherein a company unit

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displayed in the viewed billing information contains a hyperlink to billing information associated with a child node in the hierarchy.

20. (original) The method according to claim 16, wherein a charge displayed in a column of a summary billing report contains a hyperlink to a detailed billing report associated with the charge.

21. (original) The method according to claim 16, wherein the hierarchy is organized according to corporate structure and/or geographical location of the company units.

22. (previously presented) The method according to claim 16, further comprising allowing the customer to set permissions that determine access rights to billing information.

23. (original) The method according to claim 22, wherein a permission is set to determine access to a specific level of the hierarchy.

24. (original) The method according to claim 16, wherein the hierarchal structure comprises a customer-defined format comprising customer-defined labels.

25. (currently amended) A system for creating a billing statement according to a customer-defined hierarchal structure, the system comprising:

a server that stores a customer hierarchy and receives billing information and associated information, indicating ~~whether~~ that a customer desires to receive presentation

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of the billing statement via a web-based billing application, from a billing repository and formats the billing information, the billing repository having received the billing data from at least one service provider, the hierarchy comprising an assignment of telephone numbers to company units and an indication of how each of the company units relate to each other;

a processor that processes billing information associated with each assigned telephone number in accordance with the hierarchy; and

a presenter that presents the processed billing statement to the customer in accordance with the associated information, the processed billing information presented to the customer via a graphical user interface comprising a billing screen including a plurality of columnized charges listed under respective column headings and arranged according to a type of charge, such that selection by the customer of a charge in a particular column causes a report to be displayed to the customer showing detailed charges that comprise the selected charge.

26. (original) The system according to claim 25, wherein the server receives and stores updated hierarchal information from the customer.

27. (original) The system according to claim 26, wherein the updating of the hierarchal information does not affect upstream billing systems.

28. (original) The system according to claim 25, wherein the server receives and

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stores permissions from the customer that determine access rights to billing information.

29. (original) The system according to claim 25, wherein the customer-defined hierarchal structure comprises a customer-defined format comprising customer-defined labels.

30. (currently amended) A computer readable medium storing a computer program that displays electronic billing information to a customer, the computer readable medium comprising:

a receiving ~~source~~ code segment that receives a hierarchy defined by a customer, the hierarchy comprising an assignment of telephone numbers to company units and an indication of how each of the company units relate to each other;

a storing ~~source~~ code segment that stores the hierarchy on a server;

a receiving ~~source~~ code segment that receives billing data at the server from a billing repository, including associated information indicating ~~whether~~ that the customer desires presentation of the electronic billing information via a web-based billing application the billing repository having received the billing data from at least one service provider;

a processing ~~source~~ code segment that processes the billing data associated with each assigned telephone number in accordance with the hierarchy; ~~and~~

a presenting ~~source~~ code segment that presents the billing information to the

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customer in accordance with the associated information, the billing information presented to the customer via a graphical user interface comprising a billing screen including a plurality of columnized charges listed under respective column headings and arranged according to a type of charge, such that selection by the customer of a charge in a particular column causes a report to be displayed to the customer showing detailed charges that comprise the selected charge;

a first updating code segment that updates the assignments of telephone numbers, the updating comprising moving the telephone numbers within the hierarchy using Java drag and drop operations;

a second updating code segment that updates the indication of how each of the company units relate to each other in the hierarchy, the customer updating the indication of how each of the company units relate to each other in the hierarchy by moving the company units within the hierarchy using Java drag and drop operations;

an accessing code segment that enables a representative of the customer to check out the hierarchy, at which time the hierarchy is available to other representatives of the customer on a read only basis; and

a prompting code segment that prompts the representative of the customer to check in the hierarchy.

31. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 30, wherein the hierarchy

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further comprises a customer-defined format comprising customer-defined labels.

32. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the billing information is presented to the customer in accordance with a billing period defined by the customer.

33. (previously presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the billing information is sent to the customer in accordance with a billing period defined by the customer.

34. (canceled)

35. (canceled)